

Findings and Recommendations: SECURITY

18. YSA does not have policies, procedures, or staff to handle an escape from OHYC.

The possibility of escapes from OHYC is a constant threat to the safety of the surrounding community. Every effort should be made to minimize and/or eliminate these occurrences. According to Administrative Issuance # YSA-I.1-011, YSA has the responsibility and authority to request a custody order when a youth escapes from the grounds at OHYC.

The ACA recommends written procedures that are reviewed at least annually and updated as necessary. ACA further recommends that specific procedures be made available to all personnel that can be referenced quickly when an escape occurs. These procedures should include:

- prompt reporting of the escape to the facility administrator;
- mobilization of employees;
- implementation of a predetermined search plan;
- notification of law enforcement agencies, community groups, and relevant media;
- preparation of escape circulars for distribution and mailing; and
- prompt notification to all who were previously alerted, after apprehension of the escapee.

The team found that although there were written procedures in place for the escape notification process and custody order requests,³³ there are no written procedures that detail a step-by-step process for the procedures recommended by ACA or other specific procedures that should be followed quickly in the event of an escape. In addition, the team found that YSA does not have adequately trained staff at OHYC to be mobilized in the event of an escape.

The OHYC Assistant Superintendent for Security and the Chief Operating Officer for YSA maintain the primary responsibility for responding to escapes and have acquired knowledge concerning response procedures through on-the-job training, without the assistance of written procedures. The responsibility of drafting appropriate written procedures has never been delegated.

Time is one of the most critical elements involved in the apprehension of escapees. The lack of specific written procedures and adequate staff may decrease OHYC's ability to act promptly and ensure that every measure of the apprehension process is completed.

Recommendations:

- a. That the A/YSA ensure that thorough and complete escape response procedures are drafted, implemented, and distributed to all key personnel.

Agree X Disagree _____

³³ Notification to the Court that a youth has escaped.

DHS's Response to IG's Recommendation, as Received:

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG's factual findings.

- b. That the A/YSA ensure that adequately trained staff are available at OHYC to be mobilized in the event of an escape.

Agree X Disagree _____

DHS's Response to IG's Recommendation, as Received:

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG's factual findings.

19. YCOs have not had emergency response training.

ACA recommends that security employees be provided training on how to handle a riot or uprising among the residents. This training should include the distribution of a written Hazard Continuity and Contingency Plan for Emergencies. The plan should carefully instruct staff on how to handle emergencies and designate a chain of command in the event of emergencies.

OHYC has an extensive written Hazard Continuity and Contingency Plan for Emergencies, but it has only been distributed to supervisors. YCOs stated they are unaware of a contingency plan and are not aware of the chain of command in the event of a riot or uprising among the residents.

YSA does not require YCOs to undergo formal emergency response training, and the team found that YCOs do not have such training. According to a supervisory YCO, he takes small groups of YCOs to the open field by the Oak Hill Academy and teaches them various riot handling techniques when he has the time. If a serious disturbance were to take place, however, YSA could not ensure that this sporadic and informal training would be adequate.

Recommendations:

- a. That the A/YSA ensure that all YCOs receive a copy of the Hazard Continuity and Contingency Plan.

Agree X Disagree _____

DHS's Response to IG's Recommendation, as Received:

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG's factual findings.

- b. That the A/YSA ensure that YCOs receive emergency response training.

Agree X Disagree _____

DHS's Response to IG's Recommendation, as Received:

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG's factual findings.

20. Youths are not photographed when remanded to YSA's custody.

YSA's Case Management Operations Manual provides at page 12 that "[i]mmediately after a youth is ordered into YSA care and/or custody, a YSA Court Liaison Screener will meet with the youth to complete a basic screening...The Screener will also take a photograph of the youth for YSA's case file." The Manual further states, at page 16, that "[t]he OHYC Intake Staff will...take the youth's photograph if it was not taken by the Court Liaison Unit."

The team found that although it is the YSA Court Liaison Screener's responsibility to photograph youth upon arrival, youth are not being photographed. The team reviewed the files of numerous youths and found that none had photographs. The YSA Superintendent for Secure Operations stated that photographing each youth is too costly for YSA to do at this time. He further stated that although there is a machine capable of making photographic identification cards at OHYC, it is broken.

YSA employees are unable to accurately identify youths at OHYC without photographs, and if a youth escapes, employees do not have photographs that will aid law enforcement officials charged with finding the escapee.

Recommendation:

That the A/YSA ensure that each youth is photographed upon arrival at OHYC, and that a copy of this photograph be filed as required.

Agree X Disagree _____

DHS's Response to IG's Recommendation, as Received:

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG's factual findings.

21. The number and location of physical restraints are not accounted for and OHYC officials are not effectively monitoring their use.

The ACA standard regarding the use of restraints states: "Instruments of restraint should only be used as a precaution against escape during transfer; for medical reasons by

direction of the medical officer; or to prevent juvenile self-injury, injury to others, or property damage; and should not be applied for more time than is absolutely necessary.”³⁴

YSA’s use of physical restraints policy states:

The Superintendent will identify a secure area for the storage of all security equipment within the facility/institution. In case of emergencies, restraints shall also be stored in the Control Center. Serial Numbers for each piece will be recorded, and a monthly inventory will be reported to the Superintendent and/or designee by the Control Clerk. A record (Log Book) will be kept to document the issuance and use of all restraining equipment.³⁵

The team found that accountability for the use and storage of physical restraints (restraints) at OHYC is lacking. YSA was unable to provide an inventory or identify a centralized location where all restraints are located. In addition, YCOs are not signing out restraints.

Because YSA officials do not keep an accurate count of the restraints at OHYC, they cannot verify that only authorized personnel have access. In addition, without proper inventory and log-out procedures, they cannot ensure that restraints are used appropriately and with authorization. Although YSA does maintain a logbook that documents when restraints are used for any purpose other than transportation, the usefulness of the logbook is limited by the fact that there are no controls enforced regarding their use and distribution.

Recommendation:

That the A/YSA follow established policies and procedures regarding the inventory and use of physical restraints.

Agree X Disagree _____

DHS’s Response to IG’s Recommendation, as Received:

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG’s factual findings.

22. Some OHYC electronic monitoring systems are inoperative.

OHYC uses electronic monitoring systems (electronic security system cameras and viewing screens) to provide real-time viewing of both the interior and exterior of housing units

³⁴ ACA Standard 3-JTS-3A-16.

³⁵ YSA Policy Number YSA 9.6.

and outer perimeter areas. These systems are located within the housing units and the gatehouse control booth. YCOs are responsible for monitoring all electronic security and surveillance equipment.

The team found several monitoring systems at OHYC inoperative, including systems in the gatehouse and the male and female housing units. According to YCOs, some of the electronic security systems have been inoperative for several years.

Recommendation:

Agree **X** Disagree

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG's factual findings. DHS has requested that DOC provide a security assessment of OHYC. Consistent with that security assessment and to the extent practical, the A/YSA will repair and maintain all electronic monitoring systems at OHYC.

The gatehouse serves as the entrance and exit into the OHYC secured facility. No one is allowed to enter the facility unless searched by security guards, and identification must be presented.

The team noted during work observations that the top door hinge leading to the control booth area was missing and the door was ajar. YCOs stated that often the door remains open and unlocked, regardless of the missing hinge, in order to admit transportation officers into the

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control booth area to store and retrieve restraints used for youths being transported outside of OHYC. YCOs stated that several verbal requests had been made to the Assistant Superintendent of Security Operations to have the door repaired; however, he has been unresponsive.

Prior to entering or exiting the facility, visitors are momentarily detained adjacent to the control booth. Because the door to the gatehouse control booth cannot be secured, unauthorized persons may gain entry to this area, operate the control panel, and assist youths in escaping.

Recommendations:

- a. That the A/YSA ensure that the hinges on the gatehouse control booth door are repaired.

Agree _____ **X** _____ Disagree _____

DHS's Response to IG's Recommendation, as Received:

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG's factual findings.

- b. That the A/YSA develop policies and procedures to ensure that the gatehouse control booth door remains locked and secured at all times.

Agree _____ **X** _____ Disagree _____

DHS's Response to IG's Recommendation, as Received:

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG's factual findings.

- c. That the A/YSA discontinue the storage of physical restraints in the gatehouse control booth area.

Agree _____ **X** _____ Disagree _____

DHS's Response to IG's Recommendation, as Received:

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG's factual findings.

24. Policy and procedures manuals are not available in 9 of 11 youth housing units.

ACA has established manuals of standard operating procedures to assist employees in successfully completing assignments and to ensure compliance with facility policy and procedures.

The ACA standard regarding policy and procedure manuals states: “The policies and procedures for operating and maintaining the facility and its satellites are specified in a manual that is accessible to all employees and the public. This manual is reviewed at least annually and updated as needed.”³⁷ ACA further recommends: “Each department and major administrative unit in the institution maintains and makes available to employees a manual of standard operating procedures that specifies how policies are to be implemented. These procedures are reviewed at least annually and are updated as needed.”³⁸

YSA has written policies and procedures; however, the team found that only 2 of the 11 housing units had them on site. The YCOs stated that many procedures and directives are oral, and the current written policies in these two housing units are outdated and are not applicable to current daily operations.

The team also noted that the Assistant Superintendent for Security Operations did not have readily accessible written policies and procedures. The team requested copies of several policies but was referred to other sources within the OHYC.

Failure to distribute written policies and procedures to the housing units contributes to inconsistency in daily operations and may jeopardize the safety and security of youths and YCOs.

Recommendations:

- a. That the A/YSA develop up-to-date policies and procedures that govern daily housing unit operations.

Agree X Disagree _____

DHS’s Response to IG’s Recommendation, as Received:

By agreeing with this recommendation, DHS does not necessarily agree with OIG’s factual findings.

- b. That the A/YSA ensure dissemination of an updated policy and procedures manual to all housing units and to all personnel as appropriate.

Agree X Disagree _____

³⁷ ACA Standard 3-JTS-1A-17 (Ref. 2-9015).

³⁸ ACA Standard 3-JTS-1A-18 (Ref. New).

